

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7110

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 10275

NADRAS 1216 FOLLOWS. REC AT NEW DELHI BENG REPEATED TO YOU.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRAS 1216

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: KARNATAKA GOVERNOR UMA SHANKAR DIKSHIT ON ELECTIONS

1. THE QUESTION OF ELECTIONS CAME UP DURING MY CALL ON KARNATAKA GOVERNOR UMA SHANKAR DIKSHIT ON JULY 10 IN BANGALORE, AND I ASKED HIM WHEN HE, AS ONE CLOSE TO THE PRIME MINISTER, THINKS ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD. HE REPLIED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HERSELF HAD SAID NOTHING TO HIM, BUT AS NEARLY AS HE COULD PICK UP IN DELHI, "THE FIRST THINKING" HAD BEEN THAT MRS.GHANDHI WOULD HOLD PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR, TO BE FOLLOWED BY STATE ELECTIONS IN FEBRUARY, 1977. LATER, HE SAID, "THE SECOND THINKING" SEEMED TO BE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD HOLD PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN FEBRUARY, 1977, TO BE FOLLOWED A YEAR LATER BY STATE ELECTIONS. HE DID NOT GO INTO THE QUESTION OF THE MONSOON VERY DEEPLY, BUT IMPLIED THAT THE FACT THAT THE MONSOON IS OFF TO A SLOW START MAY HAVE AFFECTED THINKING IN DELHI SOMEWHAT.

2. DIKSHIT WENT ON TO SAY THAT "SOMEBODY" HAD RECENTLY SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT "INDIA SHOULD FORGET ABOUT ELECTIONS" AND GET ON WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY. DESCRIBING THIS "SOMEBODY" AS "A NOT VERY

IMPORTANT HARD LINER WHO IS NOT EVEN A MINISTER," DIKSHIT SAID THIS PERSON HAD SAID TO HIM THAT INDIA, SINCE INDEPENDENCE, HAS SEEMED TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH ELECTIONS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER MOST OF THE TIME. MIGHT IT NOT BE BETTER, DIKSHIT SAID HE WAS ASKED, FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO INDICATE THERE WOULD IN FACT BE NO ELECTIONS FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS, ALLOWING HER TO DEVOTE ALL OF HER TIME TO THE IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY AND NOT HAVE TO GIVE UP SO MUCH TIME TO ELECTIONS. HE DID NOT ANSWER THE QUESTION, BUT HIS MANNER SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT HE DOES NOT DISAGREE WITH THIS LINE OF THINKING.

3. COMMENT: DIKSHIT'S SPECULATION APPEARS VERY MUCH IN LINE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT CONCERNING ELECTIONS GIVEN TO THE AMERICAN TV GROUP AND CARRIED IN THE JULY 12 PRESS, AND THE UNIDENTIFIED "SOMEBODY" REFERRED TO BY HIM OBVIOUSLY IS CLOSER TO MRS. GANDHI'S THINKING THAN HE WOULD HAVE HAD ME BELIEVE.
MCCASKILL

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SAXBE

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